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FACT SHEET

Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development *Human Capacity Building*

OVERVIEW

USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project increases opportunities for trade, employment, and investment by improving private sector productivity. An educated and well-trained workforce, particularly at the managerial level, is crucial to Afghanistan's economic growth. To build the human capacity of the private sector, ASMED supports practical business training for Afghanistan's private sector leaders of tomorrow through internship and young professional mentorship programs. These programs reach educated and entrepreneurial individuals who benefit from intensive exposure to business conduct and organizational management. The internship and mentorship programs identify motivated interns and young professionals, choose relevant organizations for placement, and monitor participants to ensure a quality experience. These activities lead to a highly skilled and experienced workforce with a comprehensive understanding of how to develop Afghanistan's growing private sector economy.

ACTIVITIES

- **Internship program** – Third year and graduating students from Kabul, Hirat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunduz, Bamyan, Paktya, and Khost universities participate in a training program to enrich and develop the skills they would need to succeed in practical internships. Courses include business, financial, and human resource management; accounting; and marketing. Students are then placed with leading private firms, business associations, NGOs, and government agencies to gain hands-on work experience.
- **Mentorship program** – Young professionals from Kabul, Kandahar, Hirat, and Balkh are matched with senior business executive mentors. ASMED works closely with the Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF), the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) and the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), to build the capacity of young professionals who demonstrate leadership, professionalism, and an eagerness to expand their practical business knowledge.
- **Human capacity building** – Building human capital through specialized training courses and leadership training, in partnership with universities, business training providers, and private firms.
- **Developing business curricula and degrees in public universities** – Facilitating the adoption of new, improved business degrees and curricula that reflect best practices in international business.

RESULTS

- Provided 550 business skill training sessions throughout the country.
- Established an internship program benefitting 1,025 university students (25 percent women). Approximately 75 percent of the graduated interns have received full-time employment offers from their host companies.
- Offered 521 professional mentorship opportunities, linking young entrepreneurs with successful business executives.
- Established the first Bachelors in Business Administration (BBA) degree program in eastern Afghanistan at Nangarhar Public University. This program has successfully trained eight professors and graduated 80 students.

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